

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

BENJAMIN KLEIN,

Plaintiff,

-against-

SHLOMO KOENIG, SECRET POLICE CHIEF
(aka MODESTY SQUAD), et al.,

Defendants.

20-CV-9319 (PMH)

ORDER

PHILIP M. HALPERN, United States District Judge:

Plaintiff Benjamin Klein (“Plaintiff”) commenced this *pro se* action on November 6, 2020 alleging that Defendants violated his constitutional rights. On February 2, 2021, the Court issued an Order of Dismissal, which dismissed Plaintiff’s Complaint without prejudice. (Doc. 7).

The Court granted Plaintiff leave to file an Amended Comaplint within 30 days and noted that “[i]f Plaintiff fails to submit an amended complaint within the time allowed and does not show good cause to excuse such failure, the Court will enter a civil judgment consistent with this order and direct the Clerk of Court to terminate this matter.” (*Id.* at 6). The Court directed the Clerk of Court to “mail a copy of [the Order of Dismissal] to Plaintiff and note service on the docket.” (*Id.* at 5).

The docket does not reflect that Plaintiff was mailed a copy of the February 2, 2021 Order of Dismissal and the Court cannot otherwise ascertain whether the *pro se* Plaintiff received a copy of same.

Accordingly, the Court *sua sponte* extends Plaintiff’s time to file an Amended Complaint that is consistent with the standards set forth in the February 2, 2021 Order of Dismissal by 30 days. If Plaintiff does not file an Amended Complaint by May 3, 2021, the Court will direct the Clerk of Court

to terminate this action. A copy of the Order of Dismissal as well as an Amended Complaint form are annexed hereto.

The Clerk of Court is directed to mail a copy of this order to Plaintiff and note service on the docket.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: March 31, 2021
White Plains, New York

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PHM', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right, ending under the line of the printed name.

PHILIP M. HALPERN
United States District Judge

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

BENJAMIN KLEIN,

Plaintiff,

-against-

SHLOMO KOENIG, SECRET POLICE CHIEF
(aka MODESTY SQUAD), et al.,

Defendants.

20-CV-9319 (PMH)

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

PHILIP M. HALPERN, United States District Judge:

Plaintiff Benjamin Klein brings this *pro se* action, for which the filing fees have been paid, alleging that Defendants violated his constitutional rights. For the reasons stated below, the Court dismisses the complaint with leave to replead within thirty days of the date of this order.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

The Court has the authority to dismiss a complaint, even when the plaintiff has paid the filing fees, if it determines that the action is frivolous, *Fitzgerald v. First E. Seventh Tenants Corp.*, 221 F.3d 362, 363-64 (2d Cir. 2000) (per curiam) (citing *Pillay v. INS*, 45 F.3d 14, 16-17 (2d Cir. 1995) (per curiam) (holding that Court of Appeals has inherent authority to dismiss frivolous appeal)), or that the Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction, *Ruhrgas AG v. Marathon Oil Co.*, 526 U.S. 574, 583 (1999). Moreover, the court “has the power to dismiss a complaint sua sponte for failure to state a claim,” *Leonhard v. United States*, 633 F.2d 599, 609 n. 11 (2d Cir. 1980), so long as the plaintiff is given notice and “an opportunity to be heard.” *Thomas v. Scully*, 943 F.2d 259, 260 (2d Cir.1991) (per curiam); *see also Perez v. Ortiz*, 849 F.2d 793, 797 (2d Cir. 1988); Wright & Miller, *Federal Practice and Procedure* § 1357, at 301 & n. 3. The Court is obliged, however, to construe *pro se* pleadings liberally, *Harris v. Mills*, 572 F.3d 66, 72 (2d Cir. 2009), and interpret them to raise the “strongest [claims] that they suggest,” *Triestman v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons*, 470

F.3d 471, 474-75 (2d Cir. 2006) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted) (emphasis in original).

Although *pro se* litigants enjoy the Court’s “special solicitude,” *Ruotolo v. I.R.S.*, 28 F.3d 6, 8 (2d Cir. 1994) (per curiam), their pleadings must comply with Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, which requires a complaint to make a short and plain statement showing that the pleader is entitled to relief. A complaint states a claim for relief if the claim is plausible. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009) (citing *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). To review a complaint for plausibility, the Court accepts all well-pleaded factual allegations as true and draws all reasonable inferences in the pleader’s favor. *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). But the Court need not accept “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action,” which are essentially legal conclusions. *Id.* at 678 (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555).

As set forth in *Iqbal*:

[T]he pleading standard Rule 8 announces does not require detailed factual allegations, but it demands more than an unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation. A pleading that offers labels and conclusions or a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do. Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders naked assertions devoid of further factual enhancement.

Id. (internal citations, quotation marks, and alteration omitted). After separating legal conclusions from well-pleaded factual allegations, the court must determine whether those facts make it plausible – not merely possible – that the pleader is entitled to relief. *Id.*

DISCUSSION

Plaintiff’s 19-page complaint fails to comply with Rule 8. The Court has closely scrutinized Plaintiff’s complaint, and despite the information that Plaintiff presents, the Court is unable to understand what claims Plaintiff is trying to assert. The Court therefore dismisses the complaint for failure to state a claim. Even if Plaintiff’s complaint does state any valid claims, the complaint suffers from other deficiencies.

A. RICO Claim

Plaintiff's assertion that he brings claims under the civil provision of the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), 18 U.S.C. § 1961(c) fails to state a claim because he does not allege that Defendants acted as an enterprise or engaged in any racketeering activity. It also appears that Plaintiff's claims may be untimely. Additionally, many of the Defendants that Plaintiff names are private parties, and Plaintiff cannot bring federal claims against private parties. To state a civil RICO claim, Plaintiff must plead that he was injured by "(1) conduct (2) of an enterprise (3) through a pattern (4) of racketeering activity." *See Sedima, S.P.R.L. v. Imrex Co.*, 473 U.S. 479, 496 (1985). The complaint does not suggest that any such activity took place. Accordingly, the Court dismisses Plaintiff's RICO claims for failure to state a claim.

Plaintiff also cannot initiate the arrest and prosecution of any individual or entity in this Court because "the decision to prosecute is solely within the discretion of the prosecutor." *Leeke v. Timmerman*, 454 U.S. 83, 87 (1981). Nor can Plaintiff direct prosecuting attorneys to initiate a criminal proceeding against Defendants, because prosecutors possess discretionary authority to bring criminal actions, and they are "immune from control or interference by citizen or court." *Conn. Action Now, Inc. v. Roberts Plating Co.*, 457 F.2d 81, 87 (2d Cir. 1972).

B. Claims Under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and Private Parties

Because Plaintiff asserts claims that Defendants violated his constitutional rights, his claims are construed as claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege both that: (1) a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) the right was violated by a person acting under the color of state law, or a "state actor." *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48-49 (1988).

Plaintiff's claims against the private parties must also be dismissed. A claim for relief under § 1983 must allege facts showing that each defendant acted under the color of a state "statute,

ordinance, regulation, custom or usage.” 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Private parties are therefore not generally liable under the statute. *Sykes v. Bank of America*, 723 F.3d 399, 406 (2d Cir. 2013) (citing *Brentwood Acad. v. Tenn. Secondary Sch. Athletic Ass’n*, 531 U.S. 288, 295 (2001)); see also *Ciambriello v. Cnty. of Nassau*, 292 F.3d 307, 323 (2d Cir. 2002) (“[T]he United States Constitution regulates only the Government, not private parties.”). As Defendants Yitzchok Dov (Isaac, George) Fisch, Rabbi Gabriel Stern, Zalman Dov Klein, Malky Fisch, Dina Klein, Aryeh Gutman, Schlomo Gutman, Aaron Eagle, Jacob (Yossi) Eagle, Esther Klein, and Avraham Lehrer are private parties who do not work for any state or other government body, Plaintiff has not stated a claim against these defendants under § 1983.

C. Leave to Replead

Second Circuit precedent is clear that “[a] *pro se* complaint should not [be] dismiss[ed] without [the Court’s] granting leave to amend at least once when a liberal reading of the complaint gives any indication that a valid claim might be stated.” *Dolan v. Connolly*, 794 F.3d 290, 295 (2d Cir. 2015) (quoting *Chavis v. Chappius*, 618 F.3d 162, 170 (2d Cir. 2010) (internal quotation marks omitted)). Because the nature and viability of Plaintiff’s claims are not clear, the Court grants Plaintiff leave to replead within 30 days of the date of this order.

In the event that Plaintiff chooses to file an amended complaint, the Court strongly encourages him to ask for assistance from someone who can help him organize his thoughts and claims. If Plaintiff needs legal advice related to this matter, he may contact the New York Legal Assistance Group’s Legal Clinic for Pro Se Litigants in the Southern District of New York, which is a free legal clinic staffed by attorneys and paralegals to assist those who are representing themselves in civil lawsuits in this Court. A copy of the flyer with details of the clinic is attached to

this order. The amended complaint, if Plaintiff chooses to file one, should be sent to this Court's Pro Se Intake Unit.

In the statement of claim, Plaintiff must provide a short and plain statement of the relevant facts supporting each claim against each defendant named in the amended complaint. Plaintiff is also directed to provide the addresses for any named defendants. To the greatest extent possible, Plaintiff's amended complaint must:

- a) give the names and titles of all relevant persons;
- b) describe all relevant events, stating the facts that support Plaintiff's case including what each defendant did or failed to do;
- c) give the dates and times of each relevant event or, if not known, the approximate date and time of each relevant event;
- d) give the location where each relevant event occurred;
- e) describe how each defendant's acts or omissions violated Plaintiff's rights and describe the injuries Plaintiff suffered; and
- f) state what relief Plaintiff seeks from the Court, such as money damages, injunctive relief, or declaratory relief.

Essentially, the body of Plaintiff's amended complaint must tell the Court: who violated his federally protected rights; what facts show that his federally protected rights were violated; when such violation occurred; where such violation occurred; and why Plaintiff is entitled to relief. Because Plaintiff's amended complaint will completely replace, not supplement, the original complaint, any facts or claims that Plaintiff wishes to maintain must be included in the amended complaint. The amended complaint cannot be excessively long or complicated; and must be a short, plain, and concise statement of the elements of each claim for relief.

CONCLUSION

The Clerk of Court is directed to mail a copy of this order to Plaintiff and note service on the docket.

The Clerk of Court is further instructed to hold this matter open on the docket until a civil judgment is entered.

Plaintiff's complaint is dismissed for failure to state a claim for relief. The Court grants Plaintiff 30 days' leave to file an amended complaint that complies with the standards set forth above. Plaintiff must submit the amended complaint to this Court's Pro Se Intake Unit within thirty days of the date of this order, caption the document as an "Amended Complaint," and label the document with docket number 20-CV-9319 (PMH). An Amended Complaint form is attached to this order. If Plaintiff fails to submit an amended complaint within the time allowed and does not show good cause to excuse such failure, the Court will enter a civil judgment consistent with this order and direct the Clerk of Court to terminate this matter.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: February 2, 2021
New York, New York



PHILIP M. HALPERN
United States District Judge

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Write the full name of each plaintiff.

____ CV ____
(Include case number if one has been
assigned)

-against-

COMPLAINT

Do you want a jury trial?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Write the full name of each defendant. If you need more
space, please write "see attached" in the space above and
attach an additional sheet of paper with the full list of
names. The names listed above must be identical to those
contained in Section II.

NOTICE

The public can access electronic court files. For privacy and security reasons, papers filed with the court should therefore *not* contain: an individual's full social security number or full birth date; the full name of a person known to be a minor; or a complete financial account number. A filing may include *only*: the last four digits of a social security number; the year of an individual's birth; a minor's initials; and the last four digits of a financial account number. See Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.

I. BASIS FOR JURISDICTION

Federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction (limited power). Generally, only two types of cases can be heard in federal court: cases involving a federal question and cases involving diversity of citizenship of the parties. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, a case arising under the United States Constitution or federal laws or treaties is a federal question case. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1332, a case in which a citizen of one State sues a citizen of another State or nation, and the amount in controversy is more than \$75,000, is a diversity case. In a diversity case, no defendant may be a citizen of the same State as any plaintiff.

What is the basis for federal-court jurisdiction in your case?

- ☐ **Federal Question**
- ☐ **Diversity of Citizenship**

A. If you checked Federal Question

Which of your federal constitutional or federal statutory rights have been violated?

B. If you checked Diversity of Citizenship

1. Citizenship of the parties

Of what State is each party a citizen?

The plaintiff, _____, is a citizen of the State of
(Plaintiff's name)

(State in which the person resides and intends to remain.)

or, if not lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States, a citizen or subject of the foreign state of

_____.

If more than one plaintiff is named in the complaint, attach additional pages providing information for each additional plaintiff.

If the defendant is an individual:

The defendant, _____, is a citizen of the State of
(Defendant's name)

or, if not lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States, a citizen or
subject of the foreign state of

If the defendant is a corporation:

The defendant, _____, is incorporated under the laws of
the State of _____

and has its principal place of business in the State of _____

or is incorporated under the laws of (foreign state) _____

and has its principal place of business in _____.

If more than one defendant is named in the complaint, attach additional pages providing
information for each additional defendant.

II. PARTIES

A. Plaintiff Information

Provide the following information for each plaintiff named in the complaint. Attach additional
pages if needed.

First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name
Street Address		
County, City	State	Zip Code
Telephone Number	Email Address (if available)	

B. Defendant Information

To the best of your ability, provide addresses where each defendant may be served. If the correct information is not provided, it could delay or prevent service of the complaint on the defendant. Make sure that the defendants listed below are the same as those listed in the caption. Attach additional pages if needed.

Defendant 1:

First Name	Last Name	
Current Job Title (or other identifying information)		
Current Work Address (or other address where defendant may be served)		
County, City	State	Zip Code

Defendant 2:

First Name	Last Name	
Current Job Title (or other identifying information)		
Current Work Address (or other address where defendant may be served)		
County, City	State	Zip Code

Defendant 3:

First Name	Last Name	
Current Job Title (or other identifying information)		
Current Work Address (or other address where defendant may be served)		
County, City	State	Zip Code

Defendant 4:

First Name

Last Name

Current Job Title (or other identifying information)

Current Work Address (or other address where defendant may be served)

County, City

State

Zip Code

III. STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Place(s) of occurrence:

Date(s) of occurrence:

FACTS:

State here briefly the FACTS that support your case. Describe what happened, how you were harmed, and what each defendant personally did or failed to do that harmed you. Attach additional pages if needed.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

INJURIES:

If you were injured as a result of these actions, describe your injuries and what medical treatment, if any, you required and received.

IV. RELIEF

State briefly what money damages or other relief you want the court to order.

V. PLAINTIFF'S CERTIFICATION AND WARNINGS

By signing below, I certify to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief that: (1) the complaint is not being presented for an improper purpose (such as to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation); (2) the claims are supported by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument to change existing law; (3) the factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likely have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and (4) the complaint otherwise complies with the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11.

I agree to notify the Clerk's Office in writing of any changes to my mailing address. I understand that my failure to keep a current address on file with the Clerk's Office may result in the dismissal of my case.

Each Plaintiff must sign and date the complaint. Attach additional pages if necessary. If seeking to proceed without prepayment of fees, each plaintiff must also submit an IFP application.

<hr/>		<hr/>	
Dated		Plaintiff's Signature	
<hr/>			
First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name	
<hr/>			
Street Address			
<hr/>			
County, City		State	Zip Code
<hr/>			
Telephone Number		Email Address (if available)	

I have read the Pro Se (Nonprisoner) Consent to Receive Documents Electronically:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you do consent to receive documents electronically, submit the completed form with your complaint. If you do not consent, please do not attach the form.



**United States District Court
Southern District of New York**

Pro Se (Nonprisoner) Consent to Receive Documents Electronically

Parties who are not represented by an attorney and are not currently incarcerated may choose to receive documents in their cases electronically (by e-mail) instead of by regular mail. Receiving documents by regular mail is still an option, but if you would rather receive them only electronically, you must do the following:

1. Sign up for a PACER login and password by contacting PACER¹ at www.pacer.uscourts.gov or 1-800-676-6856;
2. Complete and sign this form.

If you consent to receive documents electronically, you will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing by e-mail each time a document is filed in your case. After receiving the notice, you are permitted one “free look” at the document by clicking on the hyperlinked document number in the e-mail.² Once you click the hyperlink and access the document, you may not be able to access the document for free again. After 15 days, the hyperlink will no longer provide free access. Any time that the hyperlink is accessed after the first “free look” or the 15 days, you will be asked for a PACER login and may be charged to view the document. For this reason, *you should print or save the document during the “free look” to avoid future charges.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Under Rule 5 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Local Civil Rule 5.2, and the Court’s Electronic Case Filing Rules & Instructions, documents may be served by electronic means. If you register for electronic service:

1. You will no longer receive documents in the mail;
2. If you do not view and download your documents during your “free look” and within 15 days of when the court sends the e-mail notice, you will be charged for looking at the documents;
3. This service does *not* allow you to electronically file your documents;
4. It will be your duty to regularly review the docket sheet of the case.³

¹ Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) (www.pacer.uscourts.gov) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from federal appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts, and the PACER Case Locator over the internet.

² You must review the Court’s actual order, decree, or judgment and not rely on the description in the email notice alone. See ECF Rule 4.3

³ The docket sheet is the official record of all filings in a case. You can view the docket sheet, including images of electronically filed documents, using PACER or you can use one of the public access computers available in the Clerk’s Office at the Court.

CONSENT TO ELECTRONIC SERVICE

I hereby consent to receive electronic service of notices and documents in my case(s) listed below. I affirm that:

1. I have regular access to my e-mail account and to the internet and will check regularly for Notices of Electronic Filing;
2. I have established a PACER account;
3. I understand that electronic service is service under Rule 5 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Rule 5.2 of the Local Civil Rules, and that I will no longer receive paper copies of case filings, including motions, decisions, orders, and other documents;
4. I will promptly notify the Court if there is any change in my personal data, such as name, address, or e-mail address, or if I wish to cancel this consent to electronic service;
5. I understand that I must regularly review the docket sheet of my case so that I do not miss a filing; and
6. I understand that this consent applies only to the cases listed below and that if I file additional cases in which I would like to receive electronic service of notices of documents, I must file consent forms for those cases.

Civil case(s) filed in the Southern District of New York:

Note: This consent will apply to all cases that you have filed in this court, so please list all of your pending and terminated cases. For each case, include the case name and docket number (for example, John Doe v. New City, 10-CV-01234).

Name (Last, First, MI)

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Date

Signature

Return completed form to:

Pro Se Intake Unit (Room 200)
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007